



No. CCCCXXXII.

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1851.



SEVERAL correspondents have addressed us, complaining (some in unmeasured terms) of the disposition of the Architectural Drawings in the Octagon Room, at the Royal Academy; and urging the increased necessity of obtaining an architectural exhibition elsewhere. One letter to this effect we printed last week, and we will give a second as an exponent of the general feeling:—

"I perceive," says the writer, "that poor architecture is at last fairly driven into 'the black hole' at the Royal Academy: the mask will shortly be dropped altogether, and the utmost we may expect in a year or two will be, a stray drawing here and there, somewhere up out of sight, to be guessed at, hardly to be seen—even a hole of refuge will be suffered no longer.

This is the treatment the one art is receiving from the other. Call them sisters no more, since the one will seize all the patrimony and will drive forth the other—away—any where, but to rest here no longer. And what say the influential and respectable body of architects thereto? Again and again advertisements appear in 'The Builder,' calling on the profession to spare a trifle towards the rent of a room for the 'Architectural Exhibition.' Some respond: the greater number 'fear to offend the Academy':—truly the Academy study them for their deference; or fifty trifling reasons may be found, sufficient to render them happy and contented, while they are being ridden over rough-shod.

Just so with competitions,—they will be jewed, cheated, robbed; but they will do nothing but bend their backs again for fresh stripes: the last thing is to combine and resist such imposition. A committee is formed of a few Quixotic individuals 'to do something'; but, perhaps, there are a few names in the list 'whom nobody knows'—or this public body has taken some part in it, so that—'having no connection with any other shop'—sleeps on in dignified torpor.

What wonder if the art languishes, when the majority of its professors, caring for nothing which will not feed their own personal vanity, gladly let all the rest go to the dogs, and will not understand how the raising and improving the position of the whole body would elevate each individual, and make him a beneficial return in the end. I should hope that what has taken place will be sufficient to put those gentlemen connected with the Architectural Exhibition who have assumed the labours and responsibilities of a committee, at once in possession of the necessary funds, and that a permanent institution of the kind will be established,—until Architecture is provided by the country with a suitable building, and the management of which shall be in the hands of Architects."

Now, it is right it should be understood that the responsibility of the step rests wholly with the Architect-Academicians, and that they were led to it through the smallness of the number of exhibitable drawings sent in, and a desire to obtain as much room as possible for oil paintings, of which a larger number than usual were submitted. We are enabled further to state, that it is not in any degree determined that this is henceforth to be the fixed hiding-place of poor English architecture, who is just now "catching it" from all hands, and has not a friend left to back her; but that if she appear in better clothes

next year, she will be housed in her former quarters, and allowed to take again her share of the North Room with the painters, so that (to joke on a bitter subject) we may enjoy our "half-and-half" as before, such as it was. The octagon room is quite unfit for the purpose, notwithstanding the opening of a second window in it, and is altogether inadequate for such an architectural exhibition as the metropolis ought to make. We must say, however, as we said last week, that it is about as good a room as the collection it now contains deserves; but we must at the same time also repeat, that the Architect Academicians might and should have prevented this. "What is the use of having architects amongst us," two members of the Academy said in our hearing, a few days ago, "if they will not exhibit?" The remark may be worth the consideration of our brother-architects in the Academy, not as affecting themselves, but as touching future elections, and the position of the art they profess.

The collection consists of but eighty-seven drawings and one small model, and of these there are a dozen, such as Mr. Arundale's "Meeting of Godfrey de Bouillon and the Emperor Alexius" (309); "The Pulpit in the Church of St. Gudule, at Brussels," by Mr. Essex (285), &c., which cannot be strictly called architectural. The most important drawing, and a very cleverly executed drawing it is, is 250, "A Composition," by H. E. Kendall, jun., founded on a quotation from Rogers's "Italy," which describes,

"A vast metropolis, with glittering spires,
With theatres, basilicas, adorned;
A scene of light and glory."

This is an endeavour to give examples of a certain style (in this case Italian), as applied to bridge, town-hall, and other buildings, disposed pictorially; and, though it may remind us in parts of "Rocheville," and be more noticeable for playful fancy than dignified beauty, it has many claims for praise.—No. 241, "The Mansion now in progress of erection for the Earl Ducie, at Cromhall Park," by S. S. Teulon, is a Tudor building, with large tower and high roof, less successful as a composition than some previous works in this style by the same architect.—

243 is a "North View of Preston Hall, near Maldstone," by John Thomas. There is a view, also, by Mr. Andrews, of Somerleyton Hall, the seat of Mr. Peto, (executed by Mr. Thomas), of which we shall give an engraving in an early number of our journal.—251, "Design for the Cambridgeshire and Ely County Lunatic Asylum," by E. and S. Lapidge, is Tudor in style.—249, "Drammond Castle, Perthshire," shows a design for the restoration of the Keep, by G. P. Kennedy; and 259, "The Trossacks Inn, Loch Katrine," is by the same. This Inn, which has been erected for Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, has been mentioned by us before as in character with the scenery that surrounds it.—267, "New Wing at Adare Manor, Limerick," by P. C. Hardwick, is an exceedingly good adaptation of domestic Gothic, cleverly depicted: there is nothing better in the room.—260, "The Great Western Hotel, Paddington," by the same, will probably come out better on the ground than on paper. It has two high turrets (one at each end) and a central balcony is carried by sculptured figures.—A view of "Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum," 271, by S. W. Dawkes, is

hung too low to be examined.—272, "The Goods Departure Warehouse of the Great Northern Railway at Battle Bridge," by J. L. Cubitt, is a very good drawing of a subject without any claims for representation.

—282, by W. Papworth, is a study of Penetrated arrangement, —showing public entrance to galleries of art attached to a nobleman's residence. The building is very lofty: the portico and entrance somewhat of the smallest.—Two views of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, 289 and 297, are sadly out of perspective.—The design for St. John's Church, Hobart Town (288) by G. E. Street, has an enormous tower as compared with the body of the church and a high roof with louvres.—291, "Design for proposed Lunatic Asylum," by W. Boyle, is picturesquely treated.—318, "The Handley Memorial, Slieford," by the same, is injured by the restriction of size for the base.—292 is a view of Bishop Duppa's Almshouses, Richmond, 108 being erected, by T. Little (not P. as in catalogue). These are Elizabethan in style, and have the entrances at the back, which gives a novel aspect to the front. Mr. Little also exhibits a view of "St. Mark's Church, Regent's Park," (307).—294, "Design for re-building Blackfriars-bridge, and throwing open the West Front of St. Paul's," by A. Ashpitel, has the peculiarity of proposing the erection of shops on each side to pay the interest on the cost: midway the shops are omitted for a certain distance (as at Edinburgh) to give a view of the river. Were there any probability of this design being carried out, we should, with all regard for him, protest against any such obstruction of the river view.—

"Llanarth Court, Monmouth," (304), recently rebuilt with terraces by W. and E. Habershon, is Ionic, on a basement.—314, "Design for the proposed Improvement of New Cannon-street, City," by A. B. Blenkarn, has little out of the ordinary manner.—The piers of the suspension-bridge over the Thames, just now commenced near Chelsea Hospital, will be of curious Moorish design if carried out in accordance with 315, by T. Page.

We will take this opportunity of recording that the Academy dinner of this year was distinguished by a speech from Prince Albert, expressive of His Royal Highness's esteem for the President, Sir C. L. Eastlake, of the consideration due to every artist, and of the continued favour with which the Academy is regarded by the Crown. On the second head the Prince said, "The production of all works in art or poetry requires, in their conception or execution, not only an exercise of the intellect, skill, and patience, but particularly a concurrent warmth of feeling, and a free flow of imagination. This renders them most tender plants, which will thrive only in an atmosphere calculated to maintain that warmth, and that atmosphere is one of kindness—kindness towards the artist personally, as well as towards his production. An unkind word of criticism passes like a cold blast over their tender shoots, and shrinks them up, checking the flow of the sap which was rising to produce, perhaps, multitudes of flowers and fruit. But still criticism is absolutely necessary to the development of art, and the injudicious praise of an inferior work becomes an insult to superior genius."

* This is more apparent in a lithograph of the Memorial which has just been published for the architect by Ackerman.